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## JACOB AND ESAU.

Sermon Preached in Stanford Oct. 11, 1888.  
By Rev. Geo. Darke.

TEXT. Romans 9:13—"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

These words are a quotation, as the introductory words, "as it is written," indicate. They are quoted from the prophecy of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. The language, like much that was written by the old Jewish prophets, is hyperbolic. To convey a strong impression of what he means to say, he intentionally overstates the truth he utters. This, of course, is perfectly proper and right, and is a very common rhetorical practice in our own day. But to get at the exact truth in the case we have to abate somewhat the strength of the language.

In the strict meaning of the word, God "hates" no one. On the contrary He "commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

When, therefore, it is here affirmed by the Lord that "Esau have I hated," we must bear in mind that the full force of the word "hated" is not to be taken.

Paul is talking on the subject of Election. The whole chapter is devoted to a discussion of that theme, and by reference to the context preceding this quotation, we learn that the affirmation that God loved Jacob and hated Esau is made in order to prove "that the purpose of God according to Election might stand."

Hence the easily deduced conclusion that the degree of love and hate in the text may be exactly expressed by translating the words, "Jacob have I chosen or elected, Esau have I rejected."

This passage has long been made the Gibraltar of the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election to eternal life. That it does not teach that doctrine, and that it will not bear such a construction, seems to me to be true beyond the slightest doubt. That God elects men now is freely admitted. That He elects them through belief and obedience of the gospel cannot be denied. That every man has the power to decide for himself whether or not he will be one of the elect, seems manifest from the apostolic exhortation, "make your calling and election sure." Two things in my text are beyond a peradventure. First, there is no eternal life contemplated in the passage—but only that God chose Jacob to be the head of a nation of people which He intended to raise up for a specific purpose, and that Esau was simply not chosen. Their eternal interests were not involved at all. Esau had just as good a chance, so far as his future and eternal salvation was concerned, after he was rejected as before. Second, the ground upon which Jacob was elected and his brother rejected, was not the arbitrary power of God to do as He pleases. Jacob was chosen because he was the *better* of the two for divine purpose. Just as a merchant who desires to employ a book-keeper, of two applicants for the place, will take the more competent and the better qualified; just as a physician desiring a student to read in his office will take the brighter and more promising of two boys who seek the position; just as a carpenter will choose for an apprentice the lad who shows the greatest aptitude for learning the carpenter's trade; so God chose of these two unborn infants the one in which, with the eye of omniscience, He beheld the slumbering qualities that better fitted him to accomplish the object for which He desired to use him. His purpose was to found and prepare a nation of people to which He could commit His oracles and reveal His character, which He might separate from the abominations of the surrounding peoples, and educate up to a high spiritual plane, through which after the lapse of centuries the Messiah might come according to the flesh, and by which, after He had come, the good news of His salvation might be heralded throughout the world. To start such a nation He chooses Abraham as its fountain-head, calls him out of Ur of the Chaldees, removes him far off to the westward and settles him in the land of Canaan. Of Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, He chooses the former to be in the line of descent to the coming nation, and rejects the latter. Of Isaac's two sons, He chooses Jacob and rejects Esau, and thus eliminates from the line certain strains of bad blood in Ishmael and Esau that were but ill suited to the divine purpose. In short, God wishes to attain the highest possible starting point for the nation He desires to found, in order to avail Himself of the operation of the great hereditary law that "like produces like." In reaching that starting point we cannot but observe, in the process of elimination just touched upon, what constant use God made of the great scientific principle of "natural selection" and the "survival of the fittest."

His eye is fixed upon the far-off future. The destiny of the world is involved in the choice He makes. To-day the blessings of the Christian religion, under the shadow of which we sit and in which we so greatly rejoice, are directly traceable to the fact that God chose Jacob and rejected Esau. And yet, strange to say, if we had had

the privilege of deciding between these two boys, in all probability we should have entirely reversed the divine decision, and have chosen Esau instead of Jacob. For the simple reason that at the outset Esau seems to have had every moral advantage over his brother. His character as a boy shows up in far brighter colors. Take the instance of the birth-right. Esau had just come in from a long and wearisome pursuit of game. He was well-nigh famished. Jacob was boiling soup made of lentiles. His brother, almost fainting with hunger, asked the favor of a little soup. The dictates of common humanity, not to speak of brotherly affection, should have caused the immediate granting of his request. But Jacob refused; shut up his heart in unsympathetic hardness, and then and there taking a mean, ungenerous and cruel advantage of his brother's famished condition, drove with him a hard, dishonorable bargain, the result of which was the purchase of his elder brother's birthright blessing for a mess of pottage. It was a shrewd, shabby and unprincipled trick, which we cannot too heartily despise. Then, too, when the time came for the aged Isaac to confer his final benediction, and he called Esau and sent him out to the field to find the game and prepare the savory dish which he loved, that he might eat of it for the last time and pronounce upon him his farewell blessing, the tricky Jacob was stealthily listening at the tent door. No sooner has Esau gone out than he and his mother concoct a plan to defraud Esau by practicing an outrageous imposition upon the old, blind Isaac. A kid is hastily dressed, the skin placed upon the smooth skin of his neck and of the backs of his hands and thus Jacob, palming himself off upon the old man as the hairy Esau, acting and speaking a point-blank, cool, wicked lie, goes in and gets the blessing before his brother returns. There can be no excuse or palliation for such conduct. No wonder Esau was indignant. No wonder he threatens his brother with violence, so that he flees from home for safety.

Again, when 20 years later Jacob, returning to the land of Canaan at the head of a numerous caravan, hears that Esau is coming to meet him with a company of 400 men, his guilty conscience instantly suggests that it is an errand of vengeance for the destruction of him and all his. He sends on present after present to appease his brother's supposed wrath, arranges his caravan so that those dearest to him are put last and can have the best chance to escape, and then calls upon God to help and defend him in an all-night wrestling in prayer on the banks of the Jabbok. But, lo! when Esau came, it was not to inflict vengeance, but to bestow forgiveness; not to wreak his deadly hate, but to imprint the kiss of love; not to injure, but to proffer guidance and protection. Forgotten are all the wrongs he had suffered at his brother's hand 20 years before, forgiven all his treachery and injustice, and in a fond brother's loving embrace he shows the generosity and kindness of his truly noble heart.

In all these instances the moral superiority of Esau is clearly and strongly shown. But God saw deeper than we and chose more wisely than we could have chosen. All succeeding ages have demonstrated the correctness of His decision. He saw (1), that while Esau was a dull boy, Jacob was bright and smart. At every turn Esau is outwitted. He is a mere tool in his brother's hand. His mental capacity was exceedingly limited, and his brain worked with painful slowness. Jacob could trick him with the utmost ease. Dullness is a fault that is always constitutional and incurable. Hence for Esau there was no hope that he would ever be otherwise. But Jacob's slyness and trickiness were simply the abuse of his brightness. The school teacher knows that he may thrash the stupid boy ten times a day and his wits will move no faster and his lessons will be learned no better than before. But he knows that for the smart, mischievous boy who keeps the school in an uproar, and neglects his books to play his pranks upon everyone within reach, a strong application of the birch is of incalculable benefit. I wouldn't give a farthing for a boy without a vein of restlessness and mischief in him. For that is the evidence of good parts, and shows the possession of the stuff that will make him a man of force. But I wouldn't give a farthing for a mischievous boy who is allowed to grow up ungoverned and (when he needs it) unthrashed. Bring down the rod upon his back with a vim when he requires it, or he will turn out a ruined man. Now God knew this was exactly Jacob's case. He was sly, tricky, overreaching, but He knew these faults simply betokened a bright, active mind, and that a little sound thrashing would cure him. So down comes the divine rod upon him.

[Owing to the press of other matter, we are forced to defer balance till next issue.]

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## GOD IS LOVE AND NOTHING ELSE

### PRaise THE LORD.

LETTER FROM GEORGE O. BARNES

WHO IS THE INFIDEL?

WILLIAMSON, GRANT COUNTY, KY., OCT. 16, 1888.

DEAR INTERIOR—Yesterday's Courier-Journal, with its usual sermon from Dr. Talmage, furnishes the most appropriate comment on what I have been trying to impress by voice and letter upon my generation, that I have yet seen in print. This widely circulated daily is but one of many that reproduced this utterance of the famous preacher of Brooklyn Tabernacle. It came to hundreds of thousands of readers yesterday morning. I wonder how many it shocked and disgusted? Very few, I fear. The sentiment is too familiar in orthodox pulpits, and too common in the orthodox religious library to excite much comment. It is with the hope that, at least, the limited circle who read the INTERIOR JOURNAL may have their attention called to the matter that I notice this ferocious *Monstrum*. Here it is:

"Ah, Infidelity, stand up and take thy sentence! In the presence of God and angels and man, stand up, thou monster, thy lip blasted with blasphemy, thy cheek scarred with lust, thy breath foul with the corruption of the ages! Stand up, satyr, filthy goat, buzzard of the nations, leper of the centuries! Stand up, thou monster of infidelity! Part man, part panther, part reptile, part dragon, stand up with the blood in which thou hast washed; thy feet crimson with the human gore through which thou hast waded; stand up, and take thy sentence! Down with thee to the pit, and sup on the sores and groans of families thou hast blasted, and roll on the bed of knives which thou hast sharpened for others, and let thy music be the everlasting *awwwooooo* of those whom thou hast damned! I brand the forehead of infidelity with all the crimes of self-immolation for the last century on the part of those who had their reason!"

Mr. Talmage is preaching on the crime of suicide. After conveniently disposing of the cases of Hugh Miller—who went mad, after wrestling in an unsuccessful attempt to make the first of Genesis square with his scientific theory, and blew his brains out; and of William Cowper, who, beyond doubt, went mad over an unsuccessful attempt to square Calvinism with his sweet, instinctive belief in a God of Love, and tried repeatedly to destroy himself—the preacher seems to assert, if I understand him, that the other people were sane, who destroyed themselves because they had been deluded by infidelity into the belief that future retribution was a myth. Then comes his terrific sentence on infidelity, quoted above. On which I would remark:

1. That he can only be sentencing INFIDELS, when he melodramatically bids infidelity "stand up" to hear the awful award pronounced by the pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle. "Infidelity," in the abstract, can neither "sup on sores" nor "roll on knives," nor any of the rest. Stripped of verbiage, Dr. Talmage is damning Col. Ingersoll and his followers, who have professed an utter disbelief in Talmage's God, and will not have him at any price.

2. Dr. Talmage is, of course, speaking as a mouthpiece of his God. He would not dare, formally, to sit in the judgment seat, even to consign the man who has beaten him in argument to endless torment. No! he SPEAKS FOR GOD. And the unctious approval of the hideous sentence is perfectly apparent, in very carefully constructed phrase.

3. Passing in thorough disgust, the ghastly display of "fine writing" on such a fearful subject—for we must remember that these sermons are no magnetic outbursts of *extempore* eloquence, but carefully penned discourses, furnished the press in advance of delivery—I would simply offset this great D. D.'s idea of God, by the contrasts furnished in the Bible.

Jesus—Who came to "reveal" God; to "manifest the Father," in Whose "bosom" He had lain from eternal ages—more than 1800 years ago, had some dealings with "infidelity" and "infidels," and this is the way He treated them. Surely Jerusalem was infidelity embodied. In spite of all His miracles of power, His words of Love, Jerusalem rejected the Son of God. If that is not infidelity, what is? And now comes the sentence of woe. Let us hear it:

"O, Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate!" And then the Savior of the world bowed his head in broken-hearted grief and wept like a child.

Compare this with Dr. Talmage's: "Stand up, satyr; filthy goat; buzzard of the nations," and tell me, dear reader, if this man's God, in Whose awful Name he pronounces sentence on the culprit, is the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

But there is another swifter witness against him than even this. "In the mouth of two witnesses shall everything be established."

(To be Continued.)

## LANCASTER, GARRARD COUNTY.

—It is reported that Ed. Price and Miss Mary Francis were married last night.

—A party numbering about 20 went from here to Cincinnati on the excursion Wednesday.

—The new bell is here at last and in its place at the court-house. It is a gem, with clear, mellow, melting tones.

—The News' Paint Lick correspondent says that Brown and Dunlap were filled to speak there Saturday. Why this special mention of an ordinary occurrence? —So you wanted the devil to burn all delinquent correspondents. Well, we have felt his burning touch, having strayed after the old deceiver in search of news; but to-day we come back to the frowning editor, thoroughly convinced that as a fabricator of news, he excels the other boss.

—Cicero Hall, superintendent of the Wrought Iron Range Co., is making headquarters here, and with several assistants is selling Ranges in this and adjoining counties. Some of our citizens who purchased Ranges of this Company several years ago have them yet and recommend them highly.

—Will Harris, R. R. agent at Carlisle, is visiting his parents here at his old home. Will Ferguson, a lover of the Barnes Troupe and gospel, has just returned from Williamson looking refreshed and happy. The pure gospel, has been a feast to him, powerfully preached and sweetly sung, as it will be to all candid hearers.

—The lectures being delivered nightly this week by Elder Cline have been fairly well attended. If our people knew what a treat they miss when they fail to hear these very instructive and entertaining lectures, the house would be filled every night. There will be another lecture to-night and one to-morrow night closing the series.

—Just after dark on Monday night, Clay Hamilton, a youth, while on the way from his boarding house to the store was assaulted and robbed by some unknown person. Clay was so astonished and excited that he can tell but little about it, except that he was filched of several dollars. As the thief is still at large, no steps have been taken towards a change of venue.

—Stephen Marrs, after a brief illness of acute pneumonia, died in the 73rd year of his age at his home Tuesday morning. On Wednesday morning touching and impressive funeral services were conducted by Rev. J. C. Randolph at the late residence of deceased, after which the remains were interred in Lancaster Cemetery. Mr. Marrs was one of our oldest business men, having embarked in the mercantile business in this town 30 years ago. He was upright, kind and generous, and led an even, quiet life—was honored by the old and respected by the young. We will greatly miss this aged citizen, whose mild "good morning" we heard almost daily, and whose gentle salutations strengthened our esteem and increased our admiration for this good and courteous white-haired gentleman. And now that he has gone to sleep at last, we can but join with all the town in expressions of sympathy for the family in this their grievous and mournful time, adding prayers for their consolation and comfort, and express the hope that when their allotted years have gone and the time for their departure come, that they may pass peacefully into an unclouded and endless rest with "Uncle Stephen."

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